



For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

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### **Continuation of John 6: 64-72**

Ver. 64.—*It is the spirit which quickeneth: the flesh, Arabic, the body, &c.* The Calvinists bring forward against us these words of Christ to show that in the Eucharist there is not the Flesh of Christ really and corporeally, but only spiritually and figuratively by representation and faith, because, say they, *the flesh profiteth nothing*. But if this be true, then in vain was the Word made Flesh, then in vain did the Flesh of Christ suffer and was crucified, and died. God forbid. And who does not see that the Flesh of Christ is more profitable than the mere bread of Calvin, even though it were seasoned with sugar and honey out of Calvin's throat? For in his bread there is no spirit, except the spirit of error and satanic madness.

First then SS. Cyril and Austin learnedly expound these words, thus: they are as if Christ said, "My Flesh alone profits not to preserve him who eats It unto life eternal, because it is not My mere Flesh which confers life and resurrection, but it is the

many acts of Christ's second year, because they had been given at length by the other three Evangelists. He concludes Christ's second year with the multiplication of the loaves, which He wrought about the time of the Passover, and which furnished the occasion of Christ's long argument with the Jews concerning the spiritual bread and His Flesh to be partaken in the Eucharist.

Spirit, *i.e.*, My Divinity united to the Flesh which quickens first the soul, and then the body at the Resurrection. And thus My Flesh profiteth very exceedingly, forasmuch as being united to the Spirit of the Word, it derives from It its quickening power." By a similar form of speech we are wont to say, The eye doth not see, the ear doth not hear, nor the body feel, but it is the spirit *i.e.*, the soul, which sees through the eye, and hears through the ear. Consequently, *the words, i.e.*, the reality and the mystery of My Flesh to be eaten in the Eucharist, *which I speak unto you are spirit and life*. That is, My Deity, which is a pure Spirit, is a living and quickening Spirit. For It will give you life in the- Eucharist, not My bare Flesh. So S. Augustine says, "This Flesh alone profiteth not, but let the Spirit be joined to the Flesh, and It profiteth greatly. For if the Flesh profiteth nothing, the Word would not have become Flesh." The same (*lib. 10, de Civit. Dei*) says, "The Flesh of itself cleanseth not, but through the Word by which it hath been assumed." And S. Cyril, "If the Flesh be understood alone, it is by no means able to quicken, forasmuch as it needs a Quickener, but because it is conjoined with the life-giving Word, the whole is made life-giving. For the Word of God being joined to the corruptible nature does not lose Its virtue, but the Flesh itself is lifted up to the power of the higher nature. Therefore, although the nature of flesh as flesh cannot quicken; still it doth this because it hath received the whole operation of the Word."

For Christ is here making answer to the Capharnaites murmuring as to how Christ's Flesh being eaten could give eternal life. But He gave this answer because they had murmured still more concerning the eating the flesh of Christ, and the method of doing so, which they thought of as something carnal and barbarous, as is seen by verses 52 and 60, and 61. For it seems something savage and inhuman to tear like wolves, and devour the human flesh of Christ. Hence secondly,

More aptly and naturally, *the flesh, i.e.*, the carnal understanding, by which in sooth ye suppose that My Flesh is to be visibly cut and eaten like the flesh of sheep, profits nothing for the bestowal of everlasting life: but the spirit and the spiritual intelligence, by which we believe that the Flesh of Christ united to His spiritual Divinity, *i.e.*, in a sacramental manner, veiled and hidden in the Eucharist under the species of bread and wine, is to be eaten - this gives life to soul and body. So S. Chrysostom, &c. No otherwise is S. Augustine's meaning on the 98th Ps. (*Vulg.*), if he be carefully read: He says, "It is not this body which ye see nor the blood which those who crucify Me will shed, that ye are about to eat and drink. I commend unto you a sacrament which spiritually understood will quicken you. And although it be necessary that it be visibly celebrated, yet it ought to be understood in an invisible sense." These words the Calvinists understood thus, that in the Eucharist we eat the Flesh of Christ not really, but figuratively and mystically by faith. But they are in error. For the meaning of S. Augustine is, In the Eucharist we do not eat the Flesh of Christ by visibly cutting and masticating it as the Capharnaites supposed, but under a

sacrament, *i.e.*, sacramentally and invisibly, lying hid under the species of bread and wine. For if understood otherwise, S. Augustine would conflict with himself (*Serm. 1. in Ps. xxxiii. and Lib. 22, Civit. c. 8, and elsewhere*), where he manifestly upholds the truth of Christ's Body in the Eucharist.

Wherefore Christ subjoins, *the words which I speak, &c.: Spirit, i.e.*, are spiritual, and must be understood spiritually, *i.e.*, Sacramentally, in the manner in which I have now explained, and not carnally, as ye Capharnaites, like butchers, understand them. So they are *life, i.e., vital*, and bestow life on him who heareth and eateth Me. There is a hebraism, by which the abstract is put for the concrete. Thus frequently elsewhere *the flesh and spirit* are put for the carnal and spiritual understanding and sense. Thus 2 Cor. iii. 6, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Matt. xvi. 17, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." Moreover it is common in Scripture to play upon the meanings of words. Wherefore it is not surprising that *flesh* is to be understood differently from what it is in verse 56, &c. *My Flesh is truly Food*. For there real, but here figurative flesh is meant. So Christ plays upon the meaning of water (c. iv.), rising from the corporeal to the spiritual sense. So the Apostle plays upon the word *sin* (2. Cor. v. 21), "He who knew no sin, was made sin," *i.e.*, a Victim for sin, "for us."

Thirdly, the fullest sense will be if we join both meanings previously given, and with Bede unite them into one, thus - The virtue of giving life which My Flesh eaten in the Eucharist possesses, is not derived so much from the flesh as from the Spirit of the Word which is living and life-giving. And consequently this eating of My Flesh is not to be taken in the carnal manner of butchers, but in a spiritual manner, and accommodated to the spirit, that is to say in a hidden and sacramental manner. For from the words of Christ ignorantly understood the Capharnaites alleged the contrary of both, and turned away, as is plain from the words. And so this spiritual, *i.e.*, sacramental, manner of eating the Flesh of Christ by taking the species of bread and wine, under which in reality lie hid the Body and Blood of Christ and His Divinity Itself, occasions no horror to the eater, and causes no wounding or harm to the Flesh of Christ which is eaten. For here Christ lies hid, and is invisible and indivisible like an angel. So Euthymius says, "They are things spiritual and life-giving. For we ought not simply to look at them (for that is carnally to understand them), but we ought to suppose something else, and to look upon them as mysteries with our inward eyes."

Ver. 65.—*But there are some, &c.* The reason why some of you do not receive, but oppose, My words concerning the Eucharist, is not because My saying is *hard*, as ye say, but because ye are faithless, and will not believe My many miracles and signs. For here there is need of humble faith, which ought by lowly prayer to be asked and waited for from God the Father. But ye lack humility both of prayer and faith, and therefore ye neither pray to God, nor believe in Me. So S. Augustine, Bede and Rupert.

*For Jesus knew, &c.* It means that Christ as God knew from eternity what would happen, and this foreknowledge He communicated to His Humanity from the beginning of His conception. *And who should betray Him.* By this John intimates that

of such a thing He arouses them to greater vigilance."

You will ask why Judas is called *a devil*. I answer:

(1.) because he was *διάβολος* (*diabolus*), *i.e.*, a false accuser. For he spoke evil of the works and miracles of Christ to the Scribes and chief priests.

(2.) He was a *diabolus*, Hebrew and Syriac, a *Satan*, *i.e.*, *an adversary*, because he opposed himself to Christ.

(3.) He was a *diabolus* because he did not believe in Christ because he was a thief and a liar. For the devil is "a liar and the father of a lie" (*cap. viii.*) Wherefore Christ saith, *he is a devil*, in the present tense, not *will be* in the future.

(4.) He was *a devil*, that is *a minister of the devil, an instrument and organ of the devil*. For at the instigation of the devil he betrayed Christ his Lord and his God, as though he had been possessed of a devil. Whence John says (xiii. 2), that "Satan entered into him." So S. Chrysostom and others. So in common speech a very wicked man is called *a devil*.

(5.) He was a *diabolus*, *i.e.*, *betrayer of Christ*. For in this sense *diabolus* is used for a traitor in Ecclus. xxvi. 6, in the Greek, though the Vulgate has *betrayal*. So the devil is the traitor angel, because by his malice he betrayed and ruined the angelic state. For from the angelic choirs and from, heaven Lucifer, the traitor, by his perfidy dragged down with himself to hell the third part of the stars (Apoc. xii. 4). He betrayed therefore heaven and its inhabitants to hell and destruction.

Christ is alluding to the fall of Lucifer, who being chosen by God prince of the angels, by his pride made himself a devil and the prince of the demons. In like manner Judas chosen by Christ to the angelic office of the Apostolate, by his own fault fell from it, and made himself a companion of the devil, and a *diabolus*, that we may learn to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and to fear a fall, although we stand in the most holy places. For the higher the place the greater is the fall, and the ruin the more profound.

Ver. 72.—*But he spake, &c.* Christ forewarns the Apostles, so that when they should afterwards behold the treachery of Judas, they might know that He had foreseen and foretold it, and therefore that it was not against His will, but by the permission of His certain counsel that this was done to bring about His death, by which he might redeem the human race.

Here John finishes the acts of the second year of Christ's preaching, up to the third year, or from the second Passover to the third. He proceeds with the acts of the third year in the following chapter. He passes over therefore

*Son of God*: the Greek adds, *τοῦ ζῶντος*, *the living*, so also the Syriac and Arabic read. The meaning is, We believe that Thou art the Son of God. Wherefore, we also believe that all Thy sayings are Divine and most true, even when we do not understand them, and therefore that they are life-giving, and confer salvation and eternal life. For Thou art the Son of the Living God, who in His Essence is Life, which He communicates to Thee: therefore nothing can proceed from Thee but what is vital and life-giving: neither do we expect anything else from Thee.

Ver. 71.—*Jesus answered*, Thou, O Peter, answerest in the name of all the Apostles, as if all believed in Me, and were My faithful friends. But know that thou art deceived, for one of them is a devil, unbelieving, and faithless to Me, who also will betray Me.

*Have chosen Twelve*, as to the Apostleship according to their present state apt and meet Whence it seems that Judas the traitor, even when he was first chosen by Christ, was good and honest. For prudence and charity forbid the choice of one who is dishonest. So S. Cyril, Maldonatus and others. Also S. Jerome (*lib. 3, cont. Polag.*), Tertullian (*lib. de præscrip. hæret. c. 3*). Some, however, think that Judas, when he was bad, as Christ knew, was yet chosen by Him to be an Apostle, with this object, that it might be one of His own who should betray Him, and so afford the occasion and the way for His passion and death, and from them the redemption of men. This opinion is attributed to SS. Bede and Augustine, yet neither says so expressly. Indeed, both rather intimate that Judas was chosen by Christ when he was good, even though he was known to be about to become bad by his own fault. Hear S. Augustine: “Their number of Twelve was consecrated, who through the four quarters of the world were to proclaim the Trinity. And because one of them perished, not on that account was the honour of that number taken away from them. For in the room of him who perished another was chosen.” And after a while he says, “He was chosen, from whom, albeit unwilling, and knowing it not, a great good was to proceed. For as wicked men wickedly use the good works of God, so, on the contrary, God for good uses the wicked works of men. The Lord used for good the wicked Judas, and delivered Himself to be betrayed that He might redeem us.” Hear also Bede: “To one end He chose *eleven*, to another end *one*. These He chose that they should persevere in the dignity of the apostolate, him, that by the office of his treachery He might work out the salvation of the human race.”

*A devil*: Syriac, *Satan*: Nonnus, *he who is called by posterity another new devil*. Christ would not name Judas that He might spare his reputation. “He neither openly pointed him out,” says S. Chrysostom, “nor wished him to lie concealed. The former was that he might not contend too impudently; the latter, lest supposing he was concealed, he should act too unguardedly.” He did it also that he might impress the Apostles with fear, that they like Judas might not apostatize, nor presume proudly upon their own constancy. Listen to Cyril: “He confirms them by sharper words, and makes them diligent by the peril before their eyes. For it is thus He seems to speak, Ye have need, O ye disciples, of great watchfulness, and great care for your safety: for the way of perdition is very slippery.” After a while, “He makes all more watchful, because He does not say openly who would betray Him, but affirming that the charge of such heinous impiety hung over one, He makes them all anxious, and by the dread

Judas the traitor was one of those who did not believe; indeed, that he was offended at Christ’s sayings concerning the eating His flesh: that he conceived and cherished a dislike to Christ which at last broke out into treachery against Him. The connection makes this conclusion necessary. Otherwise this mention of the traitor would be inopportune, unless from this discourse of Christ Judas had taken the first initiative of his unbelief and subsequent treachery. So S. Augustine, Bede, &c

Christ added this that the Jews might not think that He had, unaware of his future treachery, admitted Judas to the Apostolate. He had done it consciously and advisedly, that so His Passion and man’s redemption might be fulfilled as God had decreed.

Ver. 66.—*And said, &c., except it be given him, &c.*, i.e., *except My Father draw him*, as He said in verse 44. Graciously does Christ not attribute the unbelief of the Jews to their fault, but excuses them on the ground *that it was not given them of the-Father*: at the same time He consoles Himself, as it were, thus—“I do not distress Myself because many do not believe in Me, but I console Myself because the Father will cause to believe in Me those whom He hath chosen, and will cause them to come to Me. With these I am content. I am not ambitious of others. For whom the Father willeth (to come), those I also will; and those whom He willeth not (to come), those likewise I do not will.” Yet those who would not come, *i.e.*, would not believe in Christ, sinned, both because they had sufficient grace, by which they might have believed if they had wished (although they had not efficacious grace, by which they would really and actually believe), as also because they did not humbly ask of God efficacious grace, also because by their pride, and other sins, they had rendered themselves unworthy of that grace. Yea, by their obstinacy they repelled the grace and faith of God, as S. Cyprian learnedly explains (*lib. 1, epist. 3, ad. Cornel.*)

Ver. 67.—*From this time*, say Euthymius and others: otherwise the Syriac, *on account of this discourse*: Arabic, *because of this, left Jesus, &c.* These disciples were not the Apostles, for Christ excepts them in the following verse. Neither were they the seventy-two disciples. For those had not yet been designated and chosen by Christ. But they were His more constant hearers and followers, “who,” as Theophylact says, “followed Him in the rank of His disciples, and remained with Him longer than the multitudes, and so, compared with the rest of the crowd, were called His disciples. These persons therefore up to this time being allured by the sweet doctrine of Christ, fed by the loaves miraculously multiplied, and hoping to be fed in future by similar food, when they heard Christ substituting His own Flesh in the place of bread, and willing that they should eat It, thought either that He was mad, or else was contriving some horrible and savage scheme, or perchance a conspiracy against the Romans, and would inaugurate it by their tasting His flesh and blood, as Cataline had done before at Rome. Thus, to provide for their own safety,

they fell away from Christ.

S. Epiphanius declares expressly that one of these was S. Mark, who was afterwards brought back by S. Peter, and became an Evangelist (*Hæres.* 51): but others deny this, and assert that S. Mark neither saw nor heard Christ (in the flesh), but was converted by S. Peter after His death. So S. Jerome on Ecclesiastical Writers, and others.

Ver. 68.—*Jesus said therefore, &c.* For when the others were scandalized and went away from Christ “the Twelve remained,” says S. Augustine, “for not even did Judas go away:” partly for shame’s sake, not to be the only Apostle to go away, and be called an apostate; partly that he might be fed by Christ without labour on his part, as he had been hitherto; and that as he bore the bag and was a sort of purveyor for Christ’s family, he might steal and enrich himself. For he was a thief.

Christ asks the question of the Apostles for five reasons. The first was that He might leave them their liberty. As though He said, “I give you your choice: if ye wish to go away, depart: if ye wish to remain with Me, remain. I will not retain you either by force, or shame.” Listen to S. Chrysostom. “Jesus neither flattered, nor drove away: but He asked the question, not because He despised them, but that they might not seem to be retained by compulsion.” For if they had remained unwillingly, He would have been in exactly the same condition as if they had gone away.

(2.) To show His greatness of soul; and that He did not need the work of Apostles, forasmuch as He by Himself could do all things: and when they were sent away, He could substitute others who were better in their place.

(3.) That the Apostles might understand that by remaining, they did not commend, or show favour to Jesus, but to themselves. “That they received rather than conferred a benefit,” says Theophylact.

(4.) That by this freedom of choice He might the more bind them to Himself, and invite them to remain. For it often occurs, as a natural consequence, that when we are asked, we decline; when we are not asked, we desire; when we are invited, we flee; when we are not invited, we draw near.

(5.) That by this interrogation He might prove their affection, and try their constancy, and draw a confession of their true faith concerning Himself. So S. Cyril. And that such a confession was drawn forth is plain from the next verse.

Ver. 69.—*Simon Peter therefore answered, &c. Peter, as greater in rank (ordine major),* says S. Cyril, firmer in faith, more loving to Jesus, more fervent in spirit, answered in the name of the rest of the Apostles, thinking that this was the mind and feeling of all. For that which he himself thought of Jesus he believed his colleagues thought likewise.

*To whom shall we go?* Meaning, says S. Augustine, “Do you send us from thee? Give us another such as Thou art. To whom shall we go, if we leave Thee?” Wherefore S. Chrysostom says, “This is an answer of great affection. For Christ was preferable to both father and mother.”

*Thou hast the words of eternal life.* First, as it were said, “Thy words, O Jesus, are sweet and life-giving, because they promise the very eternal life. Who therefore, save a fool, would leave them, and go elsewhere?” S. Cyril saith, “Not hard are the words, as those Capharnaïtes say, but Thou hast the words of eternal life, which are able to lead those who believe to the incorruptible life.” Wherefore what Thou hast said concerning Thy flesh to be eaten, that by It we may obtain eternal life, although I do not as yet well understand it, yet am I not scandalized, nor offended by Thy words, but I firmly believe them to be true, not doubting that in due time I shall understand them better, and silently asking and beseeching Thee to cause me to do this.

(2.) By Thy words, O Jesus, Thou dost promise us eternal life, if we eat Thy Flesh. These words draw us and unite us to Thee, rather than drive us away. For who would not wish for eternal life, and such a means of obtaining it? Wherefore the Arabic renders, *To whom shall we go, since the words of eternal life are with Thee?* “Hence we learn,” says Cyril, “that one only Christ who is able to bring us to everlasting life, must be followed as our Master.”

(3.) *Thou hast the words, &c.* Because Thou art Life eternal. Therefore in Thy Flesh and Blood Thou only givest what Thou art, says S. Augustine. Thou art the Word of the Father: and therefore Thou hast in Thee eternal life, because Thou art Life eternal Itself. What wonder then if Thou bestowest on those who eat Thee, life eternal? For Thou dost bestow that very self-same thing which Thou art.

Ver. 70.—*And we believe, &c.* The Greek has the article to both *Christ* and *Son*: *ὁ Χριστὸς, the Christ* promised by God, and expected for so many ages: *ὁ υἱὸς, i.e., the Son of God* by nature and substance, not adopted by grace. “Diligently consider this,” says Cyril, “that everywhere, especially with the prefix of the article, they say, *Thou art the very Christ, the very Son of the Living God,* truly and naturally separating (this) Son from other sons of God, who being called, are adopted by grace. And we being conjoined by likeness to Him, are called sons.”

*We know,* from the testimony of John the Baptist, our prophet and master, from the many and great miracles which Thou hast wrought, from Thy heavenly doctrine, and the holiness of Thy life, which we who are in constant intercourse with Thee, know to be heavenly and Divine.